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Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a winner!

by Scott Dickie
<sdickie@pcisys.net>

The matches have been played and the points have been tallied. The TRC recently completed the first **Netrunner** World Championship, World Domination '98. Those who were lucky enough to qualify during Gridlock Weekend II this last February all faced off in cyberspace, with the championship of the world hanging in the balance.

The players all met on the virtual field of battle, Internet Relay Chat (IRC). The 48 top qualifiers armed themselves with their best Gridlock decks and faced off in groups of four for an elimination round. Each group sent their best representative to the finals round, a four- round, Swiss-style tournament between the final 12 players.

After the cyberdust had settled, one man was left standing. Tobin Lopes of Fort Collins, Colorado, claimed his position as the first **Netrunner** World Champion. Tobin was followed up by Dave Bartholow (also from Fort Collins) in second place, Scott Zarcensky in third, and Martin Mueller in fourth place. For his troubles, Tobin walked away with a complete set of **Netrunner** cards and the coveted Reflections II trophy (not to mention the curse of being the newest "player to beat").

Plans are just starting for World Domination '99. A meatspace tournament has not yet been ruled out. Let's all keep our fingers crossed!

State of the Corp - July 1998

by Jennifer Clarke Wilkes
<gadget@wizards.com>

Since I last wrote, there have been many exciting developments in both the TRC and the world of **Netrunner**. We held our very first World Championship and showed the world that this game is far from dead. We've been signing on new City Grids almost on a daily basis, passing the 100 mark not long ago. More and more new players are coming to the game, and more store owners are recognizing this customer potential. DCI tournament sanctioning will start shortly. Players have been lobbying hard for printing of the *Silent Impact*™ expansion, and the brand team is paying attention.

As I write, there are cost analyses underway to find the cheapest and fastest way to bring *Silent Impact* out. Ideas for this include low-cost wrapping, no display packaging, and Web-based sales and marketing. That doesn't mean it's a sure thing, but it is closer than we have come in nearly two years. And we have **you**, this amazing group of people who work long and hard with no monetary reward, to thank for revitalizing a game that should never have been allowed to get so sick.

As we move into the second half of 1998, I see great hope for a true **Netrunner** revival. In addition to sanctioning and the possibility of a new expansion at last, I expect a playtest of an experimental league-play format and hope to finalize the membership rewards program. I am looking into the costs of producing items, such as special T-shirts or alternate-art cards, that could make exciting prizes for leagues, tournaments, and of course, all of you deserving TRC members. We wouldn't have come so far so fast without you.

Cortical Scrub: One-Turn Wonder

by Scott Dickie
<sdickie@pcisys.net>

It has been a very grueling match for you, the honorable Corp. That lowlife Runner has brought you down to the wire. The score is 0–6, and you are losing. Somehow you've managed to get to the last card in your R&D without anyone winning (it doesn't matter why). As you start what will be your final turn of the game, you draw your last card, bringing the number in your hand up to six. You eye the Runner's cards in play: full icebreaker suite, several good money cards, ample tag protection and linkage. Then you examine your own side of the table: not a single card installed! Most of your deck is in the Archives. It doesn't look good. Then, in an explosion of intuition, it dawns on you. You can still get out of this with a win, and all in this last turn of the game!

The challenge to this puzzle is not to figure out how you can score at least 7 agenda points in one turn, but how to pull it off with the lowest possible number of bits. You are starting with 0 agenda points (you have not scored any agendas), nothing installed, and no possibility of tagging and/or bagging the Runner. You have no cards left in R&D, six cards in HQ, anything you want in Archives, and the following additional restrictions:

Beginner Level:
No additional restrictions. You can have any six Corp cards you want in your hand, and any number of each card.

Intermediate Level:
You can have any six Corp cards in your hand, but only one of any given card in your hand and archives.

Advanced Level:
Same as above, but no Tycho Extension.

Once you have solved each level, see if you can do it again with fewer bits. The best I've been able to come up with is a mimimun of 13, 20, and 22 bits for the Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, respectively. (In my 22-bit Advanced solution, I still had 9 bits left over! Can you match that?)

TRC Administrative Personnel

Sharpening Your Sealed-Deck Skills

by Tobin Lopes, 1998 World Champion
<tlopes@celestica.com>

Netrunner is a game without limits. You can do just about anything you want, which includes building phenomenally abusive decks that will win 99% of the time. But if you play only those decks, the game becomes stale and unexciting. One of the ways that **Netrunner** players keep the creative juices flowing is by participating in sealed-deck tournaments and leagues.

The sealed environment is beneficial for several reasons. It spurs card sales, which hopefully means the release of further expansions. As well, it allows newer players to play with experienced players on a similar level. Sealed-deck leagues are another way to introduce newer players to the game, and league play has kept the game interesting and challenging in many City Grids.

Fort Collins keeps the **Netrunner** temperature high by holding summer sealed-deck leagues. Every summer for the last three years, Fort Collins players have gotten together and thought up a sealed-deck environment to dabble in. Last year nine of us played in an Arena™-style league, each using a sealed starter and two *Proteus*™ boosters. Everyone played each other three times.

The format of sealed-deck play isn't important, though. What is important is sharpening your skills.

Corporation Hints:

One thing we learned very early was that the difficulty of agendas is vital to an effective deck. A Corp devoid of any fast processing needs to play with as few 5+ difficulty agendas as possible. A subtle art is minimizing agenda points while maximizing deck size. We must also be very finicky about each agenda "skill." For instance, without tagging ability is it really useful to play with Bioweapons Engineering (+1 to each source of meat damage) or On-Call Solo Team (Action: Do 1 meat damage if runner is tagged)? It would be much better to play with Main-Office Relocation (hand size +2) because we could actually use that "skill" in our game.

Node choices are also very important. In a sealed environment the Runner is often in a money crunch. Thus it benefits us to install nodes that cost quite a bit to trash. This lures the Runner into making runs and spending eurobucks to get through the ice only to find—an advertisement! Upgrades also help, although we should spend time and money only on upgrades that will be useful in such a limited environment.

With ice the choice is pretty simple: diversity! This forces the Runner to equip herself with all types of icebreakers. The better balance we strike between the three types of ice, the better. Since sentries outnumber code gates or walls, you'll probably play with a few more sentries than the others. Try to keep the mix pretty even though. The VP for Security suggests using not less than 20 ice in a 45-card deck. Pay special attention to the rez cost versus the break cost for some of the more common ice; the closer these numbers, the better for us. For instance, Fire Wall costs Corrosion, Jackhammer, and Wrecking Ball 4 bits to break while costing only 5 bits to rez. One of the top three sentries is Neural Blade, which costs many 'breakers 4 bits and up to crack.

Lastly, it's important to decide on our default action. If we get to the point where we don't have specific plan of action, do we draw cards or gain bits? This requires knowing our deck's shortcomings: is it short on bit gainers or is there a specialty card we rely on? Keep that default action in mind while playing the game.

Usually we will have to cut a few cards from our initial selection to get to a playable deck size.

Runner Hints:

When putting together the tools to take on the Corp, keep a few key things in mind. The one greatest asset Runners have is surprise, and preps that let you search your stack are a necessity. Weefs learn early that it pays to have program locators like Temple Microcode Outlet or The Short Circuit. These let you hit the Corp bigwigs with a run when they weren't expecting it.

Program choice is very important. I tend to use three sentry breakers and two each of wall and code gate breakers, because I know there are more sentries in the world than the others. Also, I've gotten into serious trouble after encountering some of those nasty sentries! One or two utility breakers could also be useful if they are a part of your pool.

When it comes to money cards, what can I say—use them! But even if you don't have a filter for the newsgroups or a Broker to invest with, you've got to get money one way or another. Often this means spending actions gaining bits instead of drawing cards.

Hardware is important—to a point. MU is always useful. Look at your program selection and decide whether you require extra MU after installing your four best programs. Add in enough to cover your needs and don't bother with any more.

One more thing: tag avoidance! Take precautions by using some (maybe two cards) but not a lot. You can bet that the Corp's resources are limited too.

During the endgame, as with the Corp, your card availability will determine your default action. When you're waiting on a slow corporate strategy or building for a major attack, be disciplined. Don't draw a card unless you have a specific one that you want to see. Often in the endgame a bit draw is better than a card.

You'll generally find you have to fill up a Runner deck to reach the required 45-card minimum.

After every game you *must* do an objective review of your play style. What did you learn about your deck? What was your constraint? Was it cards? Bits? Do you need to rethink your default action? Did you underestimate your opponent? Could you have done something different on your last few turns? If you learn something from every game, your play *will* improve. And you might find people knocking on your door to challenge the Champ!

These are some things that Fort Collins players have learned with the various leagues we've played. The leagues also spur us to discussion about certain tactics to take and strategies to employ. You can only be as strong as your best opponent. Challenge yourself and others and you will all become better players in the process.

Good luck!